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Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 AID-05 DEAE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07

JUSE-00 NSAE-00 SNM-02 TRSE-00 USIA-06 NSC-05 OES-06

OMB-01 IGA-02 SS-15 L-03 DODE-00 H-02 /077 W
---------- 115442
R 131020Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2120

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 2811

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR, BM
SUBJ: CHANNELING NARCOTICS AID THROUGH U.N.

REF: (A) STATE 197110, (B) U SHWE THAN-BULLINGTON MEMCON

1. WE BELIEVE U SHWE THAN'S SUGGESTION,THAT WE CONSIDER GIVING AID ON NARCOTICS CONTROL THROUGH THE U. N., HAS CONSIDERABLE MERIT FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

--THE GUB HAS DEMONSTRATED DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS ITS GENUINE DETERMINATION TO SUPPRESS NARCOTICS PRODUCTION AND TRAFFICKING, AND ITS EFFORTS HAVE BEGUN TO MAKE A NOTICEABLE IMPACT ON THE AMOUNT OF OPIATES LEAVING BURMA FOR INTERNATIONAL MARKETS. MOREOVER,

--IT HAS ALSO DEMONSTRATED EFFECTIVE USE OF THE NARCOTICS-RELATED ASSISTANCE WE HAVE PROVIDED. BUT,

--THE BURMESE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN MOST UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THIS BILATERAL AID RELATIONSHIP, WHICH IS GENERALLY CONTRARY TO THE WHOLE THRUST OF THEIR STRICTLY NEUTRALIST FOREIGN POLICY. ALSO,

--THEY HAVE NOW SIGNED A NARCOTICS ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT WITH THE U.N., WHICH CAUSES THEM NO POLITICAL
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MISGIVINGS SIMILAR TO THOSE CONNECTED WITH OUR BILATERAL

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RELATIONSHIP, AND WE BELIEVE THAT THEY ARE NOW BEGINNING
TO LOOK TOWARD THE U.N. EXCLUSIVELY FOR WHATEVER KIND OF
NARCOTICS AID THEY MAY NEED. CONSEQUENTLY,

--EVEN THOUGH THEIR REQUIREMENTS FOR VARIOUS KINDS
OF HELP IN THIS FIELD ARE GREAT AND WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE
FOR SEVERAL YEARS, EXCEPT PERHAPS FOR HERBICIDE THEY ARE
INCREASINGLY UNLIKELY TO ACCEPT BILATERAL NARCOTICS AID
FROM U
F -- ACCEPTING THE HELICOPTERS AND OTHER ITEMS
SHOULD PROBABLY BE VIEWED AS A TEMPORARY ABERRATION IN
GUB POLICY, AT A TIME WHEN THE BURMESE HAD NO ALTERNATIVE
SOURCES OF LARGE-SCALE ASSISTANCE, RATHER THAN THE BEGIN-
NING OF A LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP ON NARCOTICS AID. MOREOVER,

--WE HAVE NO PARTICULAR INTEREST IN GIVING THIS AID
BILATERALLY. IT EARNS US LITTLE IF ANY POLITICAL LEVERAGE
OR OTHER ADVANTAGE NOT RELATED TO THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE,
I.E., IMPROVED GUB ABILITY TO SUPPRESS ILLICIT NARCOTICS.
AID GIVEN THROUGH THE U.N. WOULD CONTRIBUTE AS WELL IF
NOT BETTER TO THIS OBJECTIVE THAN DIRECT AID FROM US,
AND IN ANY EVENT IT MAY WELL BE THE ONLY KIND OF AID THE
GUB IN THE FUTURE WILL BE WILLING TO ACCEPTOX AND FINALLY,

--CONGRESS SEEMS TO BE MOVING IN THE DIRECTION OF
INCREASINGLY PROVIDING ALL KINDS OF AID THROUGH MULTI-
LATERAL RATHER THAN BILATERAL CHANNELS; AND GIVING
NARCOTICS AID TO BURMA THROUGH THE U.N. MIGHT ELIMINATE
OR AT LEAST REDUCE SOME OF THE DIFFICULTIES WE HAVE
EXPERIENCED IN GETTING VYCGRESSIONAL APPROVAL FOR THE
PROGRAM.

2. FROM THE PESPECTIVE OF RANGOON, IT APPEARS TO US
THAT AN IDEAL NARCOTICS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR BURMA
WOULD BE ONE IN WHICH:

--THE GUB IDENTIFIES ITS NEEDS IN NARCOTICS SUPPRES-
SION AID AND SUBMITS A REQUEST TO THE U. N.;

--THE U.N. VERIFIES THE LEGITIMACY OF THE REQUEST
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AND EITHER PROVIDES THE AID DIRECTLY, OR, IN THE EVENT
IT DOES NOT HAVE THE RESOURCES TO DO SO,

--THE U.N. REQUESTS THE NECESSARY RESOURCES (MONEY,
EQUIPMENT, TRAINING, ETC.) FROM US, AND, AFTER VERIFICA-
TION THAT THE REQUEST HAS MERIT,

--WE GIVE THE RESOURCES TO THE U.N., WHICH THEN

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GIVES THEM TO THE BURMESE.

--BOTH WE AND THE U.N. WOULD CONTINUE TO MONITOR
BURMESE PERFORMANCE IN UTILIZING THE AID.

3. THERE ARE OF COURSE PROBLEMS WITH THIS APPROACH, AND MANY OF THEM MAY NOT BE APPARENT FROM RANGOON. FOR EXAMPLE, IT COULD INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF TIME NECESSARY TO RESPOND TO BURMESE REQUESTS, SINCE THERE WOULD BE AN ADDITIONAL LAYER FOR THE AID TO PASS THROUGH; AND IT MIGHT BE EVEN MORE DIFFICULT THAN AT PRESENT TO KEEP AID PROCUREMENT W D DELIVERIES IN PROPER TEMPO WITH BURMESE NEEDS AND CAPABILITIES. THERE MAY BE IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS RELATED TO THE PRECEDENT THIS MIGHT BE VIEWED AS SETTING FOR OTHER U.N. PROGRAMS ELSEWHERE. IT MIGHT BE OBJECTED THAT WE WOULD LOSE CONTROL OVER THE AID AND THE BURMESE COULD MISUSE IT. HOWEVER, WE WOULD REMAIN THE ULTIMATE SOURCE OF MOST OF THE AID AND WOULD RETAIN WHATEVER DEGREE OF CONTROL THAT FACT AFFORDS. OUR BEST PROTECTION AGAINST MISUSE OF THE AID IS AND WILL REMAIN ALERTNESS AND GOOD JUDGEMENT ON THE PART OF THIS EMBASSY, PLUS THE GOOD FAITH DEMONSTRATED BY THE BURMESE THUS FAR.

4. WE HOPE THIS IDEA WILL BE GIVEN SERIOUS CONSIDERATION AT AN APPROPRIATELY HIGH LEVEL IN THE DEPARTMENT. IF DESIRED, WE COULD DISCUSS IT INFORMALLY WITH U.N. REPRESENTATIVES HERE.

5. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE WOULD NOT WISH TO JEOPARDIZE THE ONGOING BILATERAL AID PROGRAM OR DELAY CONTEMPLATED NEW ASSISTANCE (E.G., HERBICIDE) BY PREMATURE RELIANCE ON AN UNTESTED IDEA. THEREFORE, WE RECOMMEND PRESSING ON BILATERALLY AS BEST WE CAN UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE CONFIDENTIAL

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U.N. IDEA IS FULLY ACCEPTED BY ALL PARTIES AND PROCEDURAL DETAILS ARE WORKED OUT.
OSBORN

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